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# Genomic surveillance report

Update for Belgium, 30/08/2022

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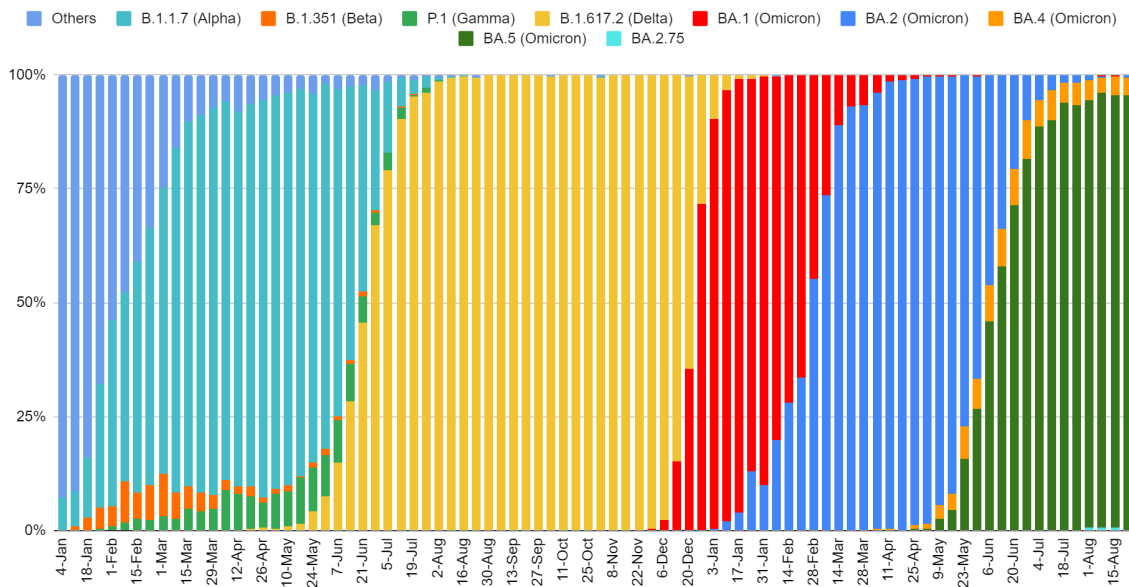
*Belgian Sequencing Consortium:*

*Cliniques Universitaires Saint-Luc, Centre Hospitalier CHU UCL Namur, ULB, UMons, UNamur, ULiège, UGent, UZA/UAntwerpen, Jessa ZH, AZ Delta, AZ Klina, IPG, AZ St Lucas Gent, OLVZ Aalst, Briant network, ZNA, AZ St Jan Brugge, UZ Brussel, LHUB-ULB, UZ Leuven/KU Leuven and Sciensano HealthData.*

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## Executive summary

Omicron BA.5 remains the dominant lineage in Belgium and accounts for around 95% of the most recent infections. The epidemic resurgence associated with the latest viral shift (BA.2 -> BA.5) has reached a peak and remains in a declining phase ( $R_t = 0.88$ ). Hospital admissions are also declining.

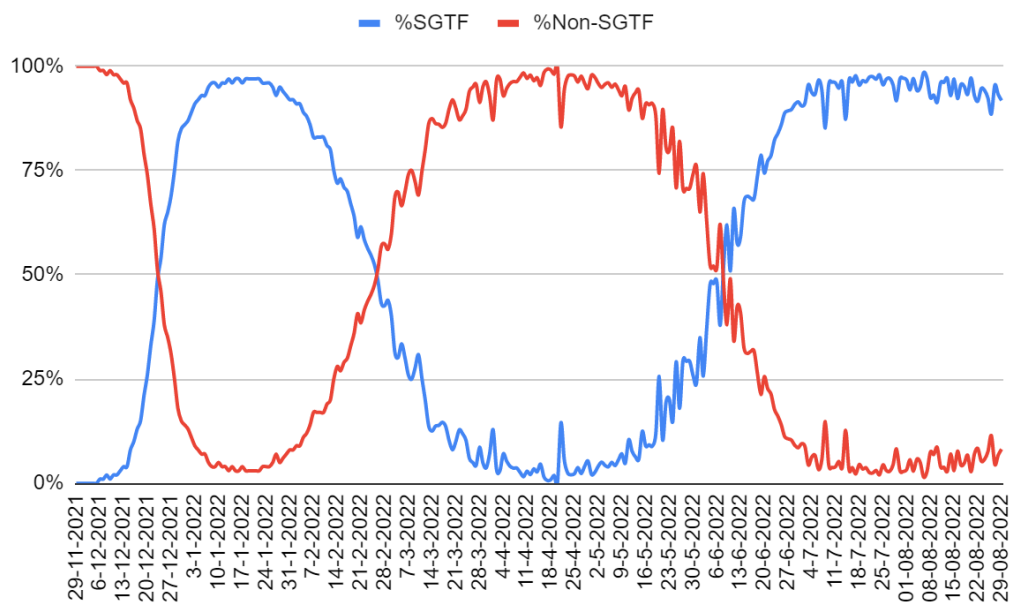


To date, seventeen BA.2.75 samples have been detected through the national genomic surveillance program.

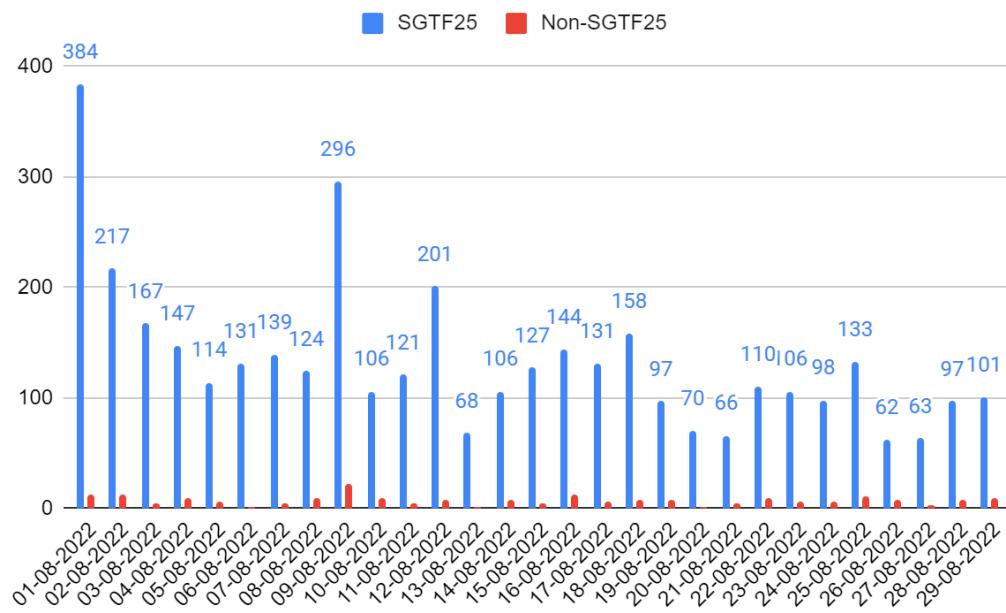
# 1 Epidemiological context and indicators related to diagnostic activities

Omicron BA.2 and BA.2.75 can be distinguished from BA.4 and BA.5 as the latter variants present a deletion 69/70 in the Spike gene (S gene target failure, SGTF).

At this stage, SGTF samples (BA.5 and BA.4) still represent the vast majority of the most recent samples analyzed, but a slow decline may have started since a couple of weeks (Figure 1). These recent changes must be interpreted with caution as there is currently a low number of samples analyzed by the federal PCR platform, and these modifications in proportions are linked to a decreasing trend in the total number of SGTF samples rather than a visible increase of non-SGTF samples (figure 2). This signal will nevertheless be followed-up carefully in the coming weeks.



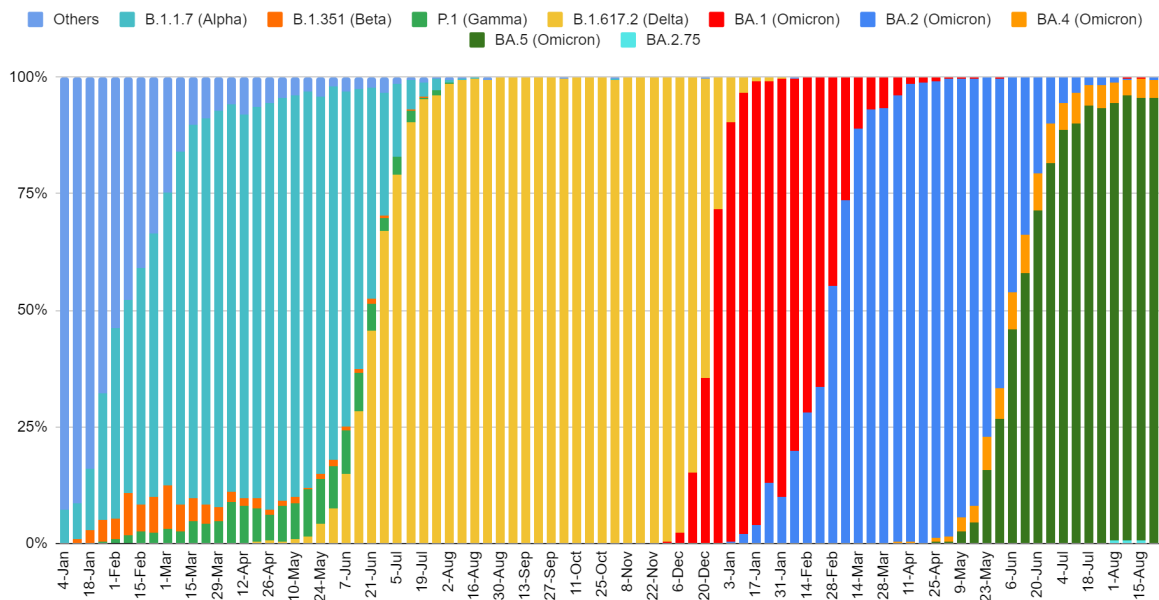
**Figure 1:** S gene target failure (SGTF, in blue: BA.4 and BA.5) and others (red: currently considered predominantly BA.2 and BA.2.75) among positive samples reported by the federal platform laboratories.



**Figure 2:** S gene target failure (SGTF, in blue: BA.4 and BA.5) and others (red: currently considered predominantly BA.2 and BA.2.75) among positive samples reported by the federal platform laboratories.

## 2 Monitoring of Variants of Concern in Belgium

During the last two weeks of baseline surveillance - 15/08/2022 to 28/08/2022 - (606 sequences collected at this stage), BA.5 represented 95%, BA.4 represented 4% and BA.2.75 represented 1%. Seventeen BA.2.75 samples have been identified at this stage. BA.2.75-positive samples have also been isolated in 38 other countries. The BA.2.75 subvariant is currently classified as a variant of interest (VOI) by the ECDC, and seems to have a (modest) transmission advantage over BA.5. It is likely that the percentage of BA.2.75 strains will continue to go up in Belgium and that BA.2.75 and BA.5 will cocirculate over the coming weeks.



**Figure 3:** Share of variants of concern per week in Belgium since January 2021.